

Appendix B:

DES Growth Management/Sprawl Policy



2002 Edition

Encouraging Better Growth Management and Development Practices through Environmental Permitting

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

Policy Statement: *The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services will encourage the application of smart growth practices, including minimum impact development practices, through education, outreach, and regulatory efforts.*

Background

In preparing the 2000 report, ***Managing Growth in New Hampshire: Changes and Challenges*** (see <http://www.state.nh.us/osp/planning/GMReport/TOC.html>), the New Hampshire Office of State Planning compared growth trends and land development patterns with the goals and objectives stated in the master plans of several towns and concluded that many current planning and zoning approaches do not provide the type and pattern of growth and development desired by communities. Sprawling patterns of growth contribute to greater fragmentation of large blocks of undeveloped open space, more traffic congestion, higher costs for public services, increased air and water pollution, and greater pressure on environmentally-sensitive areas. In 1999, Governor Jeanne Shaheen issued Executive Order 99-2 directing the Council on Resources and Development to coordinate a study concerning the issue of sprawl and to report on how State agencies could adjust their programs to both recognize the importance of preserving New Hampshire's traditional communities and landscapes and to evaluate actions they either are currently implementing or might be implementing in the future to further that goal (see the December 1999 ***Report to Governor Shaheen on Sprawl***, <http://www.state.nh.us/osp/planning/guide/docs/SprawlReport1999.pdf>). State agencies, municipalities, local planning boards and conservation commissions, developers, builders and others must work together so that future growth and development supports local goals and does not compromise New Hampshire's quality of life. DES is committed to supporting these efforts through our education, outreach, and regulatory efforts.

Implementation

To support state and local efforts to better manage future growth and development, DES encourages the use of practices that minimize the impact of development on the environment, including smart growth and sustainable development practices. By influencing the pattern, location, and nature of development on the landscape, smart growth and sustainable development practices help to reduce the impacts of sprawl and thus protect air and water quality, maintain habitat, and provide for more efficient use of our natural resources.

Increased and early communication between DES, municipalities, and permit applicants facilitates the review and approval of projects using appropriate smart growth and sustainable development practices. Continued communication between DES and municipalities also helps to ensure that local objectives are supported through our permitting activities.

Compact development, such as cluster or conservation subdivisions and higher density neighborhoods within and near existing town and village centers, energy-efficient building design, clean up and redevelopment of contaminated properties, a mixture of residential and commercial activities in traditionally-designed neighborhoods with facilities to support walking, biking, and public transportation options, and increased buffers and other protections to protect sensitive habitats are just some examples of smart growth and sustainable development practices that help maintain habitat and protect air and water quality.

Please contact the Public Information and Permitting Unit for additional information on this topic at (603) 271-3305, fax (603) 271-8013, or via email at pip@des.state.nh.us.
